

MISDIRECTION

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

STEVEN FRATTALI

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Inquiries: stevenfrattali@buffalo.edu

PERSONS

Rafer J – a rap star

Tre – his friend from NYC

Supermax – a rival to Rafer J

Lester, or Do-Les – a gang leader

One-Up – his helper

Markita and Janelle – call girls

Ganger 1

Ganger 2

Ganger 3

Ganger 4

Griot

Chorus

Place: Los Angeles

Time: 1990s

ACT 1**SCENE 1****[GRIOT ENTERS]****GRIOT**

There were two gangs in Los Angeles.

**And the situation was terminal
In the city of Los Angeles.**

**Two gangs led by two brothers –
Brothers and yet enemies.
And when the smoke cleared,
They had killed each other.**

**If any want to leave,
Open the doors wide.**

[theatre doors swing open]

**What we show is terrible.
And therefore, you decide.**

[doors swing shut after a moment]**[EXIT GRIOT]**

SCENE 2

[ENTER 4 GANGERS. A HANG OUT PLACE.]

[They lounge around drinking.]

GANGER 1
Whooo hey –

GANGER 2
Where's that bottle?

GANGER 3
Got to be around somewhere –

GANGER 4
Two of them.

GANGER 2
Cool.
[drinking]

GANGER 3 [wanting bottle]
Hey hey hey

GANGER 2
Yeah ok.

GANGER 4 [second bottle offered]
Here.

GANGER 3 [taking it, drinking]
Oooo 100 proof, put me on the moon.

GANGER 4
You're always on the moon.

GANGER 1
From the moon.

GANGER 2
Dark side.

GANGER 3
Oh yeah.

GANGER 1

What we got here anyway? This hip hop rap star, whatever he is –

GANGER 2

He's a 'Recording Artist'... the money this guy makes –

GANGER 4

Could use some of that.

GANGER 3

How we gonna get it though?...

GANGER 4

We get paid to guard him, guess that's it.

GANGER 1

Someone want to knock him off?

GANGER 4

I don't know, guess so.

GANGER 2

He does all this political stuff.

GANGER 1

Liberation, Black Power, bla bla.

GANGER 2

Like back in the day.

GANGER 3

I got the power.

[displays gun]

GANGER 4

I got two. Just left 'em in the car – poom poom.

GANGER 3

We in a war here you know, gang war.

GANGER 4

We got to waste time with this dude.

GANGER 1

Yeah.

GANGER 2

Right.

GANGER 3

We need to be out there breaking heads, that's how we gonna get money.

GANGER 4

These Mexican gangs –

GANGER 3

Vietnamese – they're killing us.

GANGER 1

Used to have so much coming in –

GANGER 3

Now everything dried up.

GANGER 4

Dried bones, we're sucking on dry bones.

GANGER 1

And on top of that, this guy have –

GANGER 2

He got his bloods from New York with him.

GANGER 3

Yeah, how many he got?

GANGER 2

Not sure.

GANGER 1

Some girl he had out here...?

GANGER 2

Yeah some dudes did whatever...

GANGER 4

When was all this I been hearing?

GANGER 1

Yeah I don't know.

GANGER 4

Complications – know what I’m saying?

GANGER 1

Yeah.

GANGER 3

We don’t need it.

GANGER 2

No.

GANGER 3

We don’t need it.

GANGER 1

Anyway keep him safe, keep him happy.

GANGER 2

Better watch out the bloods from the east he bring along.

GANGER 4

I don’t like the whole thing.

GANGER 1

Yeah. Well better go get him...

GANGER 2

Supposed to be here by now.

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

[The four GANGERS attack, not hard, just kidding, playful]

**[confused, overlapping, with physical business of mock pursuit,
mock flight, ad lib throughout]**

ALL [very freely ad lib]

Hey baby looking fine /kissy kissy/

Janey Janey / its Janelle told you –

Stop! – before/

Oh come on come on

MAR-KEET- A/let me/

Hey baby / go/ come on/
Ooo -- you got to/
He's impossible/don't squeeze me so hard/
They all are/
You bloods...learn to be-/
-have! /stop stop/ oh god eeeeeee/lets go/no no/
not here!

[ENTER ONE UP]

ONE UP
Going on here?

GANGER 2
Having a party

ONE UP
Yah, I guess. Hey girls.

JANELLE
Yeah hi.

MARKITA
Hey.

ONE UP
Been hearing you're kind of up yourselves about this guy –

GANGER 4
Nobody up anything

JANELLE
That's right.

MARKITA
Yep.

GANGERS [ad lib]
Yeah yeah yeah very funny

GANGER 1
He's ok, he's fine.

GANGER 3
Not enough money in it though. Know what I'm saying? That's what we need.

GANGER 2

We need to get out there.

GANGER 1

I like to party –

GANGER 2

Yeah --

GANGER 1

--this guy want to party all the time, that's cool but we got things to do.

GANGER 4

That's right.

GANGER 3

Boom [gun]

ONE UP

That's all fine. I know what you're saying, I ain't a fool, I need money too – what you think?

Put that away. [ganger jackets gun]

But these dudes can be a – valuable resource. You got to think of that. We got two of them, they're both here. You got to wake up! Make use of these guys, this Rafer – very big hits before...needs a new one now...this other –

GANGER 4

What's his name?

GANGER 1

Supermax

GANGER 2

Funny.

ONE UP

Not funny, he's the way to go, in my opinion – new kind of thing, you're going to see.

GANGER 3

Yeah I don't know...I know his stuff –

ONE UP

We provide things for them, they help us out. Scratch my back...

[trying to embrace Janelle]

JANELLE
Get away!

ONE UP
That's fine. Got other things to do.

[ENTER DO-LES]

DO-LES
Hey bloods.

GANGERS [ad lib, overlapping]

Hey man –

Lester –

Lester the jester --

Up man? –

Going on?

ONE UP
Where you get this guy anyway

DO-LES
Got him at the getting place, what's wrong?

ONE UP
I just got to ask, I'm sorry –

DO-LES
You know the plan. All of you got a job to do, we do it.

GANGER 1
What's it going to be money-wise?

GANGER 3
This going to be worth our time?

GANGER 2
Yeah.

GANGER 4

Yeah.

ONE UP

We need money. Power. Like they say, got a war here. Got to have songs like that. Don't need all this love songs, songs about his mamma, all this kind of love and bla bla kind of thing. That what this Rafer guy been doing – hell with that, nobody wants that, this a new time here.

DO-LES

We got to do things the right way, not go crazy on me. We play this right – telling everyone here –

We do a good job, Keller the –

ONE UP

--the record guy, the rich white guy.

DO-LES

That's right, that's it right there – ok?

ONE UP

Hell with that. This whole fucking world is – this whole world is crap!

GANGER 1

Chill out, man.

GANGER 2

Up with you anyway?

ONE UP

I went over to La Cienega other night...I was walking through this underpass – they got a big sucker like a lot a people could hide up in there – feel like you're in a big cave in ancient time or something, dragons and shit, maybe there was people in there, living up in there right then – who knows and they was watching me –

DO-LES

Ok, ok –

ONE UP

No no – and I come to this Mexican restaurant – I say fuck that, so I went on down and you know that street it's real long. I never been out there that much... I like to just start walking sometime, at night, I'm walking miles and miles sometime, it's when I feel free, like a spirit or something comes into me, but that Rafer – man, I'm a tell you something –

DO-LES

That's cool -- ok?

ONE UP

No no, I'm tell everybody here, he definitely messed with too many of them bitches.

JANELLE

That's not what we are ok?

MARKITA

Yeah.

ONE UP

I ain't saying they're innocent, they spread they legs every which way.

JANELLE

We don't need to listen to this.

MARKITA

Yeah we're going to leave, you keep up.

ONE UP

We all know that -- from east to west at all time of the night and of the day.

GANGER 1

Eh you sound like Rafer there.

GANGER 2

Been taking lessons.

ONE UP

Yeah I seen it you know, I seen it, I seen the way he operate, and the way the WORLD, the WORLD --- IT, OPERATE....see'm talking?...THE!...WORLD!...

DO LESS

All right man shut up.

ONE UP

I know people that want to kill that fucker....!! but it ain't gonna happen, see...not with me...around...I'm holding his spirit right there...in my hand –

GANGER 3

You been sucking that pipe too much, that's for sure.

GANGER 4

Seen everything here.

GANGER 1

Yeah let's get out a here.

JANELLE

Yeah I want to leave.

MARKITA

Me too.

GANGER 2

You want go over to that new place they got, just open up?

GANGER 3

Yeah let's go.

DO-LES

Chill, ok? Chill.

GANGER 4

Yeah let's go.

ONE UP

But who is he though? Who is he? Why I always got to be with this mystery...? I be around, don't worry, I be around.

DO-LES

I'm going to be needing you later. Stay sober.

[EXIT ONE UP]

DO-LES

Guy's crazy. But crazy's good sometimes.

[ENTER RAFER and TRE]

DO-LES

Hey

TRE

Hey

RAFER

Up

How're things?

DO-LES

Ok.

RAFER

Ok? Just ok?

Things got to be GREAT –

We're here,
Even though we're a little late.

GANGER 1

Yeah wonder why.

[laughter]

RAFER

No no no –

Hey baby [to the girls]

MARKITA

I'm gonna stick with Tre, he at least has manners.

JANELLE

Yeah, that's right.

TRE [both girls clinging to him]

Not my idea, man.

RAFER

That's cool. Well, what we going to do about this?

[TRE takes out his guitar. Plays in a romantic jazz style.
RAFER sings/recites. An actual guitarist can come on stage if
needed.]

RAFER

And so if I want to spend
All my time
Messing around
With some rhyme
Well that's just me
And who knows, now who can say
That any way

I spend my day
 Is wrong
 If I end up with
 If I make the day and then the night,
 Sometimes so dead and all so boring wrong,
 Come out right and end up in
 A song

GANGER 2
 Hey not bad.

GANGER 3
 Yeah that's cool.

GANGER 4
 Very cool.

DO-LES
 Thought you were a rapper.

RAFER
 I am I am, but you know... my soul...my SOUL it has lots of moving parts you might say.
 Yeah....can I say...

[TRE plays a similar tune. RAFER sings/recites.]

RAFER
 Wanted to call her up
 The other day
 Wanted to feel
 Her touch
 What is there
 Left to say
 Well you
 Might actually
 Assert
 You know
 She is such a flirt
 She really is
 It really is a shame
 And even just the sound
 Of her name
 Makes my heart
 Stop and then start
 Again oh yes
 Love is a long
 Long chain
 Heavy and endless

MARKITA
Oh Rafer honey –

JANELLE
Oh baby baby...

MARKITA
Yes...

JANELLE
You'll get over it.

MARKITA
Yes that's right.

JANELLE
She broke your heart.

RAFER
Well I don't know...

MARKITA
Tell us who it is.

JANELLE
We'll pound her head in. – Just kidding

MARKITA
You got to snap out.

TRE
That's right Rafe, that's right – tell him.

RAFER
Yeah I'm fine, I'm fine.

DO-LES
Very cool man, very cool. So yeah we got to see Keller tomorrow.

RAFER
Got to do this now?

DO-LES
Better to get it over with.

[ENTER ONE UP and SUPER MAX]

RAFER
Ok, got my gun out in the car. Just kidding.

DO-LES

Know what you mean.

RAFER

Ok well I'll be sober by then. I think.

GANGERS [ad lib with some chuckles]

Yeah maybe might could be etc

ONE UP

Yeah ok. You been here before. I know about that.

This my man Supermax.

GANGERS [ad lib]

Hey/eh man/up etc

[SUPERMAX responds with just a nod or gesture]

ONE UP

So yeah, all that's cool. I heard about that. Now you can find out what the real gang life is like, you doin' your research for your next role, since you act in the movies and everything. I think I even saw one – very authentic, you sing, you dance, you're a real talented type of guy, what they call a renaissance man kind of thing. I heard you even went to a fancy drama school and the whole nine.

[laughter from gangers]

You ought to just stay out here, this here kind of a drama school, let me tell you. But that's cool, you don't have to be a real ganger, you just have to be like the idea of one. I can get into that.

[more laughter, somewhat uneasy]

RAFER

Wait!

Wait!!

WAIT!!!

[all are still]

Someone here want to say I'm not genuine, the real thing? I'll show you the real thing, want to see the real thing? Well here it is.

[draws gun]

DO-LES

Hey man watch out with that.

RAFER

Which a you suckers wants to see how good I can shoot? This a ten millimeter Ha? Ha? Ha?

DO-LES

Chill, man, chill.

RAFER

Hey don't worry. Everything's cool here. I'm just joking around. Think I wanna off my own bloods, my homies? My fans? You don't realize how much respect for you I have, and gratitude. That you put me where I am. But now I got to pay back -- pay back, everything that I've been given.

But I'm still real. In fact I'm more than real. I am the Real Deal, and we're going to start changing the deal that we been getting here and there and everywhere. I am announcing right now a new time and a new way and a new day. Yeah and a new night too.

ONE UP

No, no – you can blow your horn, walls gonna tumble down, I don't know about that. Why we don't have a contest? see who got more mojo, more game –

What you say? What you say?

SUPERMAX

Yeah yeah, I think so.

RAFER

Yeah all right. What we supposed to do?

ONE UP

My man here'll go first. Then you see if you can match.

RAFER

Cool. Ok go ahead man. You're on.

SUPERMAX

All right all right all right. I'm in charge
But don't break out the marge,
I ain't no white bread –

And you're gonna give me __ [pelvic move]

[JANELLE and MARKITA suppress giggles.]

Yeah that's cool [noticing them, but moving on]

Ain't I a man? Ain't I a man?

We got to watch, got to make a plan –

Ain't I a man? but I ain't your number one nigger

You like it long you like it thick

You like it hard and harder you got to have my dick

Got your white boys but want something bigger

Ain't I a man? but I ain't your number one nigger

All you white hos you all just alike

All you ever think about who you gone fuck

But on the pussy scale you don't rate that high

You just a horizontal way to pass my time

You got your white boys but you want something bigger

Ain't I a man? But I ain't your number one nigger

[JANELLE and MARKITA snickering.]

JANELLE

Hmm...yeah ok.

MARKITA

Yeah we saw it ...I guess...

JANELLE

It was great...

MARKITA

Yeah.

JANELLE

Really.

MARKITA

Really.

JANELLE

It was.

MARKITA

Yep.

ONE UP

Ok Mr. Rafer man. What you got to show?

RAFER

Yeah, ok...

I am the number one guest of both the east and of the west
And ain't nobody like me and there never ever will be
And THIS is what you're going to see

[RAFER breaks off abruptly.]

Other than that, I'm not gonna give you anything. I don't need to deal with these amateurs
come out the woodwork, want to challenge me, put me in my place – man what a joke.

Tell this guy Keller I'll see him later.

[EXIT RAFER]

ONE UP

Yeah! Yeah! [laughs] Ha ha – That's a nice excuse, isn't it?

SUPERMAX

Yeah guess so.

ONE UP

Come on.

SUPERMAX

Yeah ok.

[EXIT ONE UP and SUPERMAX]

GANGERS [ad lib, overlapping]

Lets go, let's get out of here, yeah come on...etc

[EXIT GANGERS]

MARKITA

I don't like this.

JANELLE

Rafe doesn't need to get mixed up in –

MARKITA

Something like this – no

JANELLE

No.

MARKITA

No, he doesn't.

JANELLE
Who is this new guy anyway?

MARKITA
Better try to find out.

JANELLE
Thought we did find out.

MARKITA
Found out some things. Got to find out more.

JANELLE
Guess so.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 4

[A hang out place, very late]

[ENTER RAFER and TRE]

TRE

Pretty late. Kinda tired –

RAFER

Yeah.

TRE

Had me playing with that Supermax guy...poom poom – he got a lot of energy but he don't have no message you know. I don't really like that.

RAFER

His dick is his message.

TRE

Yeah...joke.

RAFER

It's a whole thing going on – rappers with no message. If the message is gone, then the soul is gone. See it everywhere – soul is gone from everything. That's why this place is weird.

TRE

It's dangerous.

RAFER

A dark spirit here...just like...my mamma, you know, she taught me to stand and to speak out. Bring the spirit to the people. They've got to rise up. They're just lying down, and that's fine -- I like to have a good time, I like to party –

TRE

Think I heard about that.

RAFER

Right – you know --

TRE

Yeah –

RAFER

--but there's got to be something else. Back in the day -- how come we don't have those things anymore. She always called it The Movement -- they were going someplace, changing things.

TRE

I know what you mean, everything got -- forgotten -- shaved right down, shaved bare. You can just see it, you go out -- especially here, it's like 'what are we doing?' ...

RAFER

Yeah right.

TRE

'Where is everybody? what we doing here?'

RAFER

Place is like some kind of game board.

They weren't playing no game -- all the stuff they did. She told me all of it: helping older people, helping sick people, helping poor people -- and there was a lot of them -- helping kids, get them breakfast every morning -- if you can imagine these guys -- major dudes you know -- serving eggs and toast and all that to a bunch of little kids but they did that, helping young guys don't want to get drafted sent to Viet Nam get blown up, maybe help them get into the community college or something, keeping watch over these racist cop bastards so they don't be breaking peoples' heads, helping women with small kids to not get evicted from their place -- places like dumps -- try to put an arm lock on some scumbag landlord -- someone like Keller, right? -- to fix the place up -- Way she tells it, it was like a whole rising up....

I wish I could have been there, I always wish I could have been...

But now, what we got? Look at all this. Where are we anyway?...floating in a void...what are we? Just some kind of animals chewing on each other? ...well, anyway...

TRE

Yeah, no sense to get all...I don't know....

RAFER

I guess.

TRE

She around? do you know?

RAFER

Not sure. I been thinking of her every every every day -- for the past three years. Three whole years, all the time.... Can I say?

TRE

I'll be on the lookout.

RAFER

You never met her.

TRE

No, heard about her a lot.

RAFER

Sorry to put all this on you.

TRE

No no no. What I'm here for.

But I think I need to go to bed now....

RAFER

Yeah me too. Alone.

TRE

Yeah ok. Look man, don't worry. We'll do this gig here. – And we'll find her.

RAFER

Yeah maybe.

TRE

I'm with you.

RAFER

I know, I know.

[they embrace]

TRE

All right, get some sleep.

RAFER

Yep. See you tomorrow.

TRE

Ok.

[EXIT BOTH in opposite directions.]

SCENE 5**[ENTER DO-LES]****[ENTER JANELE and MARKITA]****DO-LES****Where you been?****MARKITA****Around.****JANELLE****Yeah around.****MARKITA****Why?****DO-LES****What you mean ‘why’?! Got a job to do. I’ll tell you to be here, be there, this time, that time, whatever time, you be there ok?****MARKITA****Yeah ok.****JANELLE****Yeah...chill.****DO-ES****No, no chill. We got a bad situation – these Mexicans, these Vietnamese – we got to deal. To deal, we got to know. To know, we need spies. Sad but true. I’ll take care of the Asian muthers, you get me information on the Mexicans and these dudes coming in from the east and you better produce. Ok? Understand?****[he grabs Markita roughly]****MARKITA****Ok ok –****JANELLE [trying to intervene]****Hey hey! –****DO-LES****You too. Both of you – you produce. You been slacking, you’re running with this Rafer dude. That’s fine – you get me everything on him too – where he is, who with, doing what -- the whole thing. You take turns getting in the sack with him, ok? He open up to you then. I want to know what’s going through his head. Understand?!**

[he grabs Janelle]

JANELLE
Ok ok !

MARKITA [trying to intervene]
You don't have to --!

DO-LES
Yeah I do have to. And this Tre guy – where, when, who with – all that. Now get out there.

[EXIT DO-LES]

JANELLE
I'm not going to do what that son a bitch says.

MARKITA
He can take a hike.

JANELLE
Hope he does, far as possible.

MARKITA
What we going to do?

JANELLE
I ain't going to do it.

MARKITA
He never go at us like that before.

JANELLE
Tell him whatever.

MARKITA
Yeah, some things, you know...

JANELLE
But not like what he's saying.

MARKITA
No no.

JANELLE
He can take a hike.

MARKITA
Better not tell Rafer.

[pause]

JANELLE
Tell Tre ok?

MARKTA
Yeah he's such a sweet guy.

JANELLE
True gentleman. Wish more like him.

MARKITA
Yeah. Let's go.

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

SCENE 6 [the street]**[ENTER TRE]****[ENTER ONE UP]****ONE UP****Hey man, up man, up!****TRE****Yeah hey.****ONE UP****I'm real impressed you know – you, Rafer – your good bud. How long you known each other?****TRE****Yeah you know, a while.****ONE UP****Yeah. He's a major dude no doubt about. Lots of money there – he giving you a decent cut?****TRE****We work it out.****ONE UP****But I don't know if he's really the man, you know, the man for the moment like what we got going on here.****TRE****Yeah I don't know –****ONE UP****Dump that love song stuff, songs about his girl, his mamma – come on man, get real, he got to get real here. Know'm sayin'?****TRE****It's what he sees, it's what he has to say. To the world. Not just –****ONE UP****Ain't no such thing as the world. The world is just a bunch of stuff flying around. It just pushing and heaving and smashing like waves, the ocean waves crashing on the shore. That shore is us! Don't he see this? He's being – we're all being – crashed down on. He got to step up.**

TRE

That's crazy, this is crazy talk here, I'm sorry. He is stepping up to all the things like what you mentioned – but he's speaking out to all that, he knows you got to –

ONE UP

No no –

TRE

--a positive message.

ONE UP

Ain't no positive and I'm telling you it's past that time. You got to get with that. Certain people don't want it...money gonna be going in a different direction.

TRE

Yeah no he doesn't care about that.

ONE UP

Maybe he better. Could be dangerous do what he's doing. We got a contest here. A fight. My man's going to win.

TRE

No man sorry –

ONE UP

Look look --

TRE

No no, get lost – out my face. I'm out of here.

ONE UP

Tell him, better tell him. I'm going to make sure nothing bad happen to him, but he's got to be heads up. I can't –

TRE

He doesn't need your heads up.

ONE UP

I'm just saying, I'm warning.

TRE

That's cool. I got to go.

[EXIT TRE]

[EXIT ONE UP]

SCENE 7 [hang out place]

[ENTER DO-LES]

[ENTER GANGER 1]

DO-LES

So this guy Supermax –

GANGER 1

Where they get him anyway?

DO-LES

I don't know – he's up and coming, whatever. But you got to hang with him. You keep him happy, be around... you talk, bla bla....

GANGER 1

Yeah ok.

DO-LES

But the main thing, you got to be on his side always – whatever the situation, whatever -- you back him up, he's your good bud, no matter.... Ok?

GANGER 1

Yeah sure.

DO-LES

Not to stand out too much –

GANGER 1

Right – no, that's fine.

DO-LES

Yeah, so that's how we got to do it. And of course you're his body guard.

GANGER 1

They expect any big trouble like that?

DO-LES

Can't tell -- be honest with you, it's hard to say. I don't expect it. I don't think it's something coming down the tunnel on him, but you know –

GANGER 1

Can't ever predict. Seen it lots of times. Anytime there's money, there's – can I say? – blood. Way of the world. Money, blood. Money, blood.

DO-LES

I hear you. And so along with that, this One Up guy – he’s some kind of loose cannon. He used to be ok, kind of strange but not too bad. I don’t know what happened to him. Got to keep an eye on him for me. Ok?

GANGER 1

Yeah, no problem.

DO-LES

Just watch him, let me know. I can get you extra money above and beyond, you help us out.

GANGER 1

I trust you, man.

DO-LES

We go back a little ways.

GANGER 1

Yeah, little ways.

DO-LES

Ok, keep me posted.

GANGER 1

All right.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 8 [the women's place]

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA. They are freshening their make-up, etc. preparing to attend a party.]

JANELLE

I'm super worried about all this, I'm super –

MARKITA

Yes, me too.

JANELLE

Super worried.

MARKITA

Completely.

JANELLE

They're –

MARKITA

They're crazy.

JANELLE

They all are.

MARKITA

No, no –

JANELLE

Well, that's true –

MARKITA

Rafer knows what he's doing. Tre's the sweetest sweetest –

JANELLE

Sweetest guy there is. But if Rafer – fire breathing dragon that he is – he find out what really happened –

MARKITA

No telling what might happen: he does whatever, someone else does something –

JANELLE

Yeah that's the way, you know.

MARKITA

Yah that's the way it goes. Then you have –

JANELLE

That's when guys get killed.

MARKITA

...A woman, a girl, whatever she is –

JANELLE

She around?

MARKITA

I don't even think she is...

JANELLE

Kind a crazy herself.

MARKITA

Her pants were like burning up for a while.

JANELLE

I know, I saw it. Smoke coming out her dress –

MARKITA

She get one guy, another, another...

JANELLE

She shoving them right in.

MARKITA

But then –

JANELLE

Yeah, something happened.

MARKITA

She shouldn't have been where she was or whatever.

JANELLE

They ever find them?

MARKITA

They got killed.

JANELLE

Really? they're dead?

MARKITA

Yes.

JANELLE

Did they really...? You know...

MARKITA

Nobody knows. But some of these fools we got here want to throw it in his face.

JANELLE

You think they would? they really that low?

MARKITA

Mostly not but could be some want to. I don't know.

JANELLE

And we supposed to spy on Rafer and Tre?

MARKITA

That's what he wants. Not going to.

JANELLE

Report back to Lester, but tell him the wrong stuff.

MARKITA

Yes. Rafer goes east, we tell him he went west.

JANELLE

Yeah, and Tre too.

MARKITA

You think we should tell Tre what we know, the whole thing?

JANELLE

I don't know.

MARKITA

Better go. Got to show up at that party...

JANELLE

Yeab ok. I'm coming...

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 9 [a secret place]

[ENTER DO-LES]

[ENTER ONE UP]

ONE UP

So Mr. Rafer, big star shining in the sky kinda guy – he meet with the man yet -- Keller? Heard he did.

DO-LES

How you hear that?

ONE UP

I heard it – oh yeah – poom poom – I’m still telling you, my man Super Max – super duper duper man – poom poom – he’s going to be the man up coming. I’m One Up, he’s up and coming – your Lester the jester, they call you do-less, why they call you that, cuz you’re slacking –

DO-LES

They don’t call me, I call me Do-Les, that’s cuz I do more. Ok? I don’t need all this jive from you.

ONE UP

He have a problem, this Rafer guy?

DO-LES

Yeah yeah, he had a problem.

ONE UP

Keller want to keep him in a jar, make hm a little jack-in-the-box?

DO-LES

...yeah that’s cool – Yes, that’s right. It’s not a joke, don’t laugh. He gets cheated that much, like what he was – again – he had this before – he’s up to here with it. He has two sides, you know. No telling what might happen.

ONE UP

Yeah maybe.

DO-LES

So now you and your people, you keep him distracted – booze, dope, girls – and keep him in there working – either one or the other. He singing and all or he’s drunk high or in the sack -- way he is, shouldn’t be hard. But watch out for any kind of change, he gets ideas....

ONE UP

Yeah yeah ok.

DO-LES

This guy's going to be good for us. We get his money, we use him for public relations, move ourselves up in the world. You understand?

ONE UP

Supermax's better. We got to be hard, militant – I'm telling you. Where are we going with all this? We get a cut of all the weapons – not girls, dope, all this....We sell fuckin white phosphorous! C4! – to some dudes want to take some people out. They got to pay. You can't just get that anywhere. Drugs anywhere. Go down to the corner, that's like your five and dime of dope. But you want to take some people out, all his people at once, you need the firepower. I got the way to get it. Wave of the future. Drugs already legal, judge on the bench smoke crack. But you want your firepower, that's what you want. Drugs pissy anty stuff, small time stuff, they make it legal pretty soon anyway. Guns where it's at now, the big money. machine guns, fuckin grenades, explosives, C4 man, E3, that stuff so cool, incendiary -- burn shit...wave of the future. None a this cocaine shit, who cares about that? You want to do some damage. That's what you want to do.

[produces a wad of bills]

Look at that, man. \$20, 000 in my pocket: them's 100s, times 200. When the last time you seen that much green cash? And I got the gold too, got it stashed away.

DO-LES

That's cool. I get it, man, I get it. Who you think you're talking to here?

ONE UP

I know who I'm talking to. I'm talking to one of the biggest jive artists –

DO-LES

Oh yeah, oh yeah –

ONE UP

--and con artists

DO-LES

--oh yeah..

ONE UP

--to ever be shooting his mouth off....

DO-LES

It's true, it's all true. But see, I ain't crazy. Why you think Mr. Charles X, the X man –

ONE UP

What he call himself that for anyway?

DO LES

I don't know, it's just some weird thing he has – 'Call me X' he said first time I met him. I'm like, 'ok'. He's got this whole thing, 'what I did, what I didn't do' back whenever.

ONE UP

In the movement.

DO-LES

Yeh.

ONE UP

After the movement.

DO-LES

Oh yeah. which was maybe even worse than the movement, I don't know....

ONE UP

But he don't use me and he don't use you, which is what it is – we're his dogs.

DO-LES

Whatever. We have a role. I have a function, and I do it, and I know how to. And then I put in some of my own ideas here and there, and some he knows about and some he does not and that's fine so far. But I'm not crazy, and he knows I'm not crazy. I'm not an angel and neither is he. Is he the devil? I don't know. Am I? I don't think so, I'm a realist. So is he. But for sure neither one of us is crazy. And you're not supposed to be crazy either.

ONE UP

I'm not.

DO-LES

What you were saying sounds nuts, man.

ONE UP

Ain't nuts, it's the way it has to be.

DO-LES

Just cool down a little. We'll talk later about all this.

ONE UP

Yeah ok. Just remember –

DO-LES

Yeah sure.

[EXIT DO-LES]

[EXIT ONE UP]

SCENE 10 [hang out place]

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

[ENTER TRE]

JANELLE

Hey Tre honey.

TRE

Hey.

MARKITA

Hey love, how are you?

TRE

I'm good, I'm good...

JANELLE

Tell him.

MARKITA

Yeah ok.

TRE

Tell me what?

MARKITA

That Lester he wants –

TRE

He said 'call me Do-Less, but really I do more...'

JANELLE

Yeah, he always says that.

MARKITA

That's his little act he does.

TRE

So what about?

JANELLE

He says he wants us to spy for him.

MARKITA

We're supposed to give him information about Rafer.

JANELLE
Where he is, where he's going –

MARKITA
What he's doing and who with –

JANELLE
All that.

TRE
Yeah ok – for what though?

MARKITA
Don't know.

JANELLE
No.

MARKITA
We have a bad feeling.

JANELLE
Yes.

MARKITA
Why we don't want to do it.

JANELLE
No we don't.

MARKITA
No.

TRE
What you going to do instead?

JANELLE
We thought we'd give him fake information.

MARKITA
Mislead, throw him off the track. I don't trust him, been knowing him years...

JANELLE
He's changed lately. Real strange.

TRE

Yeah, all right, it's a good idea, go ahead. What you mean, though, you have a bad feeling?

JANELLE

Just...

MARKITA

I don't know....

TRE

I heard about his girl from back then. What happened there?

MARKITA

I don't talk about it but –

JANELLE

She got messed up you know....

MARKITA

Yeah.

JANELLE

You know what I'm saying.

TRE

Who did it?

MARKITA

Don't know.

TRE

My bloods from the east, they're hunting around, they want to know.

JANELLE

Does he?

TRE

He never says anything.

MARKITA

So then how do they know?

TRE

Back there, people know about it. They want to know. So the bloods from the east they're hunting.

JANELLE

No no –

MARKITA

Don't do that.

JANELLE

Tell them not to. We heard they were dead anyway.

MARKITA

They don't know this place.

JANELLE

That's right, could be dangerous.

TRE

Dead already. Yeah ok.

MARKITA

We'll give him the wrong info and we'll keep you posted.

JANELLE

Whatever we tell him, Rafe can always be somewhere else.

TRE

He's always somewhere else anyway, you know what I mean?

JANELLE

Yeah ok.

MARKITA

We want to keep it that way.

JANELLE

That's right.

TRE

Ok, so keep me posted.

MARKITA

Yeah we will.

JANELLE

Bye.

MARKITA

Bye, hun.

JANELLE

Yeah, bye bye.

TRE

Ok ok...

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

Women women women women women

[EXIT TRE]

SCENE 11 [a secret place]

[ENTER DO-LES]

[ENTER SUPERMAX]

DO-LES

This Rafer is over with -- know what I'm saying?

SUPERMAX

Kind of getting that feeling myself.

DO-LES

Right. Keller disconnecting from him, he's a has been now. We need you – someone militant, strong. You hear about his girl from before?

SUPERMAX

No.

DO-LES

Yeah, some bloods at some party got really – they locked her in a room taking turns. It was bad. What I mean by need for militant – got to focus them and discipline. They got to be a fighting force, not some bunch of crazies do a thing like that.

SUPERMAX

Does he know?

DO-LES

Oh yeah, I had to tell him myself. That was when he was here before. He had a contract then. Then he goes back to New York. Now he's back here, got a contract now. But he is being ditched, I tell you – it's a raw deal. She got it raw, he getting it raw now, yeah.

SUPERMAX

What's he say about that?

DO-LES

The contract?

SUPERMAX

No, his girl. He still with her?

DO-LES

No, that's over. He wanted to kill, of course. But we didn't know who did it. But in a way I think he got over it by now, water under the bridge you know.

SUPERMAX

He don't seem like a guy that forgets.

DO-LES

Depends what it is. He got so much stuff going on. Now it's his mamma he mostly thinks about, funny.

SUPERMAX

Yeah kind of. His father around here? heard he was.

DO-LES

No, don't think so. Look, you got to show him up with these guys. They see him -- all his rings and chains and gold and booze and dope and hookers hanging on him -- it's a bad influence. We can't have a bunch of guys just want to party and all that. They got to be hard instead, they got to be like an army, and all his idealistic 'rights' and 'liberation' -- all that crap from way back -- no. Got to be an army that comes in, takes over. These other groups eating us up, putting us out of business. We got to put them out, put them under ground.

SUPERMAX

Put him underground too.

DO-LES

I don't know about that.

SUPERMAX

I don't like him.

DO-LES

Well, I can see that.

SUPERMAX

Attitude -- you know? -- attitude. He wouldn't even step up to me, just walked away, leave me hanging there. That was not cool. He say stuff about me?

DO-LES

Yeah, maybe...I don't want to get into this.

SUPERMAX

What? What's he say?

DO-LES

That you're just some kind of no-talent, can't rhyme, can't sing, can't dance -- stuff like that.

SUPERMAX

You think he's hooked up with the feds behind the scenes? Informer? something like that?

DO-LES

All right look –

SUPERMAX

Cause I heard his mother in trouble with them.

DO-LES

That was a long time ago, back with the movement, all that stuff.

SUPERMAX

If she had problems with the FBI back then, she still does. They don't give up, like one of those eels, you know, they latch on, that's it, never let go. They don't let go of her, don't let go of him either. He have to make a deal with them to protect her.

DO-LES

I don't know.

SUPERMAX

I heard little bits of rumors back there, I'm suspicious you know.

DO-LES

I am too, but we got to play this step by step here. Ok?

SUPERMAX

Yeah all right.

DO-LES

Ok. Be cool, we'll deal with this whole thing. I'll let you know.

SUPERMAX

All right.

[EXIT BOTH]

END OF ACT I

ACT II**SCENE 1 [a secret place]****[ENTER DO-LES and GANGER 1]****GANGER 1**

You know this guy Supermax knows, I think he does. What I heard. Seems like others do too from back there.

DO-LES

Where is she anyway?

GANGER 1

She's here.

DO-LES

You see him around?

GANGER 1

Oh yeah. I'm with them, him and his bloods from back there.

DO-LES

We don't want to escalate – he have someone he feels gets him, is in with him, he's less likely to go off the handle.

GANGER 1

No way now. He's gone past a tipping point.

DO-LES

Think so?

GANGER 1

Oh yeah.

DO-LES

Stick with him, let me know. Supermax knows what he has to do?

GANGER 1

Yeah, he's fine.

DO-LES

Make sure. He backs out last minute, everything's over.

GANGER 1
Ok.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 2

[ENTER JANELLE]

[ENTER MARKITA]

JANELLE

You hear that Supermax knows something?

MARKITA

Been hearing rumors.

JANELLE

Something like they weren't from here, from back there. You think they did that maybe?

MARKITA

No, they don't really know who did what.

JANELLE

This Lester – what he's doing –?

MARKITA

I don't know –

JANELLE

Does he know?

[ENTER TRE]

JANELLE

Hey love.

MARKITA

Just talking about you.

TRE

Good or bad?

JANELLE

Great!

MARKITA

That's right.

TRE

Ok, ok.... They ever find who...I mean we heard *this*, we heard *that*.

MARKITA

All we ever heard was...stuff. Can't trust any of it.

TRE

Cops figure out?

JANELLE

Cops!?

MARKITA

Hun don't talk about no cops, lord...

[she laughs]

JANELLE

Yeah don't talk about those dudes. Ha! hoooo

[laughter]

MARKTA

Yeah cops...ha ha

JANELLE

Cops raped me before. Don't happen anymore....

MARKITA

Oh yeah...

JANELLE

But then so did gangers and white dudes too. Markita same thing. One of them I cut so bad was afraid he'd die on me, but lucky thing he didn't, so I didn't get as much time then, just had to be in the juvenile. That's where I first got to know Markita, she was in.

MARKTA

Oh yeah, I was in there.

JANELLE

If we tell Rafer it was some bloods –

MARKITA

Say we knew –

JANELLE

Yeah say we knew the ones that did that – he's like to go off his head completely.

MARKITA

We got to push him in the right direction.

JANELLE

So we tell him the cops did it. That's the safest way.

TRE

Why you have to tell him at all?

JANELLE

'Cause someone's going to tell him. One of them dudes going to throw it right in his face sooner or later, I'm surprised it ain't happened yet.

MARKITA

Someone tells Rafer what might have happened that night, he start shooting everybody, maybe shoot Keller himself.

TRE

Then we can't tell him anything at all. I don't like the idea of hiding stuff from him, he's my best friend, but even so....Where is she anyway?

MARKITA

She left town, went back home.

JANELLE

Heard she's with someone else.

MARKITA

We just have to break it to him in the right way, and then blame it on the cop pigs – which is just as well because that's what they are.

JANELLE

And if they didn't rape her then they did a million other sisters at a million other times and so fuck them.

MARKITA

Yeah that's true.

JANELLE

That's right.

TRE

He have too much booze, too much whatever and too many bullets for his guns.

JANELLE

We got to settle him down.

MARKITA

Well, you know...I think I know... how to do that.

[laughter]

TRE

Well ok we'll see. But I think that could work.

[laughter]

MARKITA

Ok well –

JANELLE

Let's go.

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

TRE

Women women women...

[EXIT TRE]

SCENE 3 [SUPERMAX's place]

[ENTER GANGER 1]

[ENTER SUPERMAX]

GANGER 1

Eh man, how's it going?

SUPERMAX

I'm ok I'm ok. Thinking...can't help it...you know.

GANGER 1

So heard there's kind of a competition going on.

SUPERMAX

Yeah, I don't know what it is or who set it up. Kind of strange – two different performers invited out here at once, you know, same time...like some kind of set up.

GANGER 1

Eh you know this Keller wants to see who can deliver what he wants.

SUPERMAX

He should have figured that out before. But hey, I'm just gonna say it -- I'm gonna BE the one, the king. I will rule. Anyone think of rap, hip hop, rapping, rhyming – it's going to be me, Super Max, they think of – not him. He go back to his mamma. I heard about that. Heard she's like nuts or something... yeah....

GANGER 1

Heard other things too that movement stuff way back you know.

SUPERMAX

Yeah old time stuff –

GANGER 1

Liberation bla bla.... FBI came down on that, scatter them to the wind. I say good. Know why?

SUPERMAX

Why?

GANGER 1

Bunch of communists. Yeah. They got their orders from Cuba. Some went there. From China. They went there too – big red carpet kind of thing.

SUPERMAX

I ain't anti-America you know.

GANGER 1

Me neither.

SUPERMAX

It has problems.

[Drinks raising bottle]

[laughter]

SUPERMAX

Yeah lots of stuff. But we're free here. I put it out there for the people. They get with that. Buy my records. I get money. That's cool. They get something, I get something – ain't no free nothing.

GANGER 1

They do all this stuff for people though, I saw it you know.

SUPERMAX

That's cool I do stuff. I spread it around. I'm up there on stage. I spread it around behind the scenes. You hear about his girl? heard people figured stuff out.

GANGER 1

Yeah they were from back there not here. More messed up people back there than here, believe me.

SUPERMAX

Yeah, ok.... He was good before, I'm better now. Far as that other stuff concerned, I wouldn't talk about it unless he force me into it. Thing I would say, it looks to me like he didn't even try to find out who did that and then do. The. Right. Thing -- Be. A. Man. Get revenge. But hey – he's got better things to do, right? He's all talk, all image. I'm image, but I'm real. He ain't real. What you think?

GANGER 1

Yeah I think the same. We got to be his bodyguards – easy job. He's just in the studio or in the sack.

[Laughter]

SUPERMAX

That's it right there.

GANGER 1

Let's go out...hang out. Maybe a little...hmm hmm...

**SUPERMAX
OK.**

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 4 [hang out place]**[ENTER RAFER and TRE]****RAFER****This clown they bring out here try to show me up – what a joke – and I’m hearing –****TRE****Yeah yeah –****RAFER****You know?****TRE****Chill out a little.****RAFER****Yeah I’m chill, I’m chill....That Keller dude, white guy, heard he leans toward him. What a joke. And that son of a bitch –****TRE****Rough dude, man.****RAFER****Yeah I’m being cheated here. He tells me, ‘I’ll give you ten percent.’ I got to put out for him! – my voice, my songs, my soul – are not for sale! I am sorry...I don’t know...I’m just...What do I know...****TRE****Chill out. Don’t cross him. We give him what he wants –****RAFER****Yeah, maybe...****TRE****--and then get the hell out of here.****RAFER****You heard any more?****TRE****Those two been my spies.**

RAFER

Been anything else?

TRE

Oh hey – getting jealous on me.

RAFER

Just kidding man, just kidding.

TRE

Ok.

RAFER

Ok. So yeah, they find out she's around? she's ok?

TRE

Yeah that's what they say.

RAFER

I got to see her.

TRE

They say they can set it up. Look, be careful man.

RAFER

I am, I am.

[ENTER GANGERS]

GANGER 1

See her around at all,

GANGER 2

Your girlfriend from back whenever?

[Laughter]

GANGER 3

Can she still walk?

GANGER 4

“Can she still walk?”

[Laughter]

[RAFER IS SILENT]

TRE

I got my bloods from the east. Ok? You understand?

GANGER 1

Yeah, that's cool.

GANGER 2

You bring 'em on, man.

GANGER 3

Yeah, that's right.

GANGER 4

You can bring it, that's fine.

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

GANGER 1

Hey baby, come on.

[tries to embrace JANELLE]

JANELLE

Get away!

GANGER 2

Come on.

[tries to embrace MARKITA]

MARKITA

No! no!

JANELLE

You all get away.

MARKITA

Yes! Away!

[RAFER INTERVENES]

RAFER

All right look – you get your hands off her!

GANGER 1

Well hey hey hey –

GANGER 2
What we got here?

GANGER 3
Got something.

GANGER 4
Tough guy, singin' dancin' tough guy.

GANGER 1
You and your boy can just come on.

GANGER 2
Anytime.

GANGER 3
Bring all your friends too.

GANGER 4
That you got sneakin' around.

GANGER 1
Your bloods from the east, they slinkin' and they crinkin'.

GANGER 2
Where is your girl at anyway?

GANGER 3
Yeah.

GANGER 4
Heh yeah.

[laughter from the ganger]

TRE
Look, let's get out of here.

RAFER
I have to deal with these guys.

TRE
Do it in the right way, at the right time. You have other things to do. Don't be jerked around by these losers. Come on, let's go.

RAFER
All right.

[EXIT RAFER and TRE]

JANELLE
Let's go.

MARKITA
Yes.

GANGER 4
I think you'll be coming back though.

MARKITA
No.

JANELLE
No.

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

[General laughter from the gangers]

GANGER 1
Got work to do.

ALL
Yeah ok, right, yeah let's go etc. ad lib

[EXIT ALL]

SCENE 5

[ENTER DO-LES and SUPERMAX]

DO-LES

Look. We need to promote you. You got to put it in his face, put it in his face.

SUPERMAX

I don't really want to do that.

DO-LES

You got to do it and – hey, he's disrespecting you left and right. Wouldn't step up, just walked out. Left you standing there. That didn't look good.

SUPERMAX

Yeah I know.

DO-LES

Then he just throws you out of his place. Just like you're on the same level with them others, his clowns. I heard about that.

SUPERMAX

Yeah...yeah... ok...I guess I have to.

DO-LES

I'm going to let you know where and when. Stand by.

SUPERMAX

Are you sure about this?

DO-LES

Yes. I am.

SUPERMAX

All right.

[EXIT DO-LES]

[EXIT SUPERMAX]

SCENE 6 [Rafer's place]**[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]****JANELLE****Where they at? supposed to meet us.****MARKITA****I don't know. Said be here, we're here.****JANELLE****Things going off track. We been tricked, I think.****MARKITA****What are they doing now? they're going crazy.****JANELLE****I don't know. You know what I'm saying?****MARKITA****I was warning...****JANELLE****I know, I was too. It's that –****MARKITA****That Lester.****JANELLE****Yes. He's a snake!****MARKITA****He's right in the grass.****JANELLE****Los Angeles – what we doing here? we spend our life like this...what the hell?****MARKITA****It has its ups and it has its downs. Let's just settle down a bit here. Maybe we can get out of here someday...Where are they anyway?****[ENTER RAFER and TRE]**

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

RAFER

Break out the guns, man, let's do it.

JANELLE and MARKITA [ad lib, overlapping; they rush about, pulling their hair, etc.]
No no no no no, NO! NO! NO!!

TRE

Yeah ok.

RAFER

Ammo –

TRE

Got it here.

MARKITA

What's all this!

JANELLE

Yeah, what's all this? YOU CRAZY?

RAFER [handling gun]

That's it right there, man – 10 mm. This will get some points across. You know? Yes!

TRE

I'm with you man, don't worry....

MARKITA

You are going crazy.

JANELLE

Please! ---

MARKITA

Please!

RAFER

I'm not worried. No. These people are cheating me – these other jerks, these losers disrespecting me... They bring in some clown-boy no-talent...lordy lordy lord, they were scraping down, scraping way down in that barrel....

So now ! –

[loads clip into gun]

[ENTER DO-LES]

DO-LES

Came to check on you.

Eh hey hey hey – fan club ...this your fan club. They want to keep you safe.

JANELLE

That's right. And what the hell have you been doing?

MARKITA

What happened to you Lester?

JANELLE

You were always a sneaking around type, that's cool.

MARKITA

Yeah, that was it, was a known thing – fine, that was you – but now: you are trying to do. I don't know what....

RAFER

Well, I want to also. I want to also, ok?

[gestures with gun]

DO-LES

We need to have a little private talk here. Little private talk

[DO-LESS takes RAFER aside]

DO-LES

Assert yourself -- your rights – in a better way. You need to be a model for these guys. Not someone who comes in so hot-headed and ruins their whole set up they're all working for. These guys all working for Keller.

RAFER

So, are you?

DO-LES

No, no. I know it looks it. I work for someone else. I can't talk about it. There are many sides here. It's a war here, many sides – my side is close to yours and what your people were involved in in the past. Not the same exactly. But close, you know. Think. Cool down. Think.

But. The cops wouldn't mind if you got rid of certain people here.

RAFER

Do you know who did it?

DO-LES

Yes, we do. I do. And I'll lure them out to an out-of-the-way place. They won't suspect. They'll be drunk, high – whatever. You come in then -- they're all half more than half, two thirds in the bag -- and with your bloods out of the night like a spirit of revenge, not like –

RAFER

Yeah ok –

DO-LES

--but in FACT a spirit of revenge. You come in and rid the earth of these scum bags. Get rid of them. That will really show you're the WAY. They need to see you strong, intense – a leader.

RAFER

Yes, all right. Where? When?

DO-LES

I don't yet have it all worked out, but we'll get it nailed down. But here's the plan: they'll all scatter as soon as they see you – they know the situation, they're my tools. Keep those two occupied, so they suspect nothing. Get them good and drunk. You come in --by yourself, makes sure – my people'll step back and disappear.

RAFER

I don't like this. But I'll do it anyway on the chance I can get the revenge I need. It's been on my mind for years.

DO-LES

We'll talk later. I'll keep you informed.

RAFER

All right, ok.

DO-LES

Ok, catch you later.

[EXIT DO-LES]

RAFER [to the women]

I have to go. Got some things to do.

[EXIT RAFER]

MARKITA
I don't like this.

JANELLE
Yeah, me neither.

MARKITA
Let's go.

JANELLE
Yeah.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 7 [a meeting place]**[ENTER DO-LES and GANGER 1]****DO-LES**

We got it set up. They've all got their little plans – ha! yeah.... He thinks he going to be having a duel with the ringleader. Maybe his bloods from the east going to take out some others.

GANGER 1

What we going to do about that?

DO-LES

Got it covered. He's going to do this move – challenge him to go outside of town, empty place, no one around, just the two of them, that kind of thing.

GANGER 1

He's ok with playing that role, this Supermax guy?

DO-LES

I briefed him, he's cool.

GANGER 1

She do what we say? Where is she anyway?

DO-LES

She's around. Yeah, she will. She has to, she knows. She'll say what we tell her and then that'll filter back to him. He'll get all revved up, breathing fire all over. Just what we want. We shadow him. And that's it. Any questions?

GANGER 1

No. Pretty standard. Done it a hundred times. You're going to be there?

DO-LES

Oh yeah.

GANGER 1

Ok, good.

DO-LES

Keep me informed.

GANGER 1
Sure.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 8 [Rafer's place]

[ENTER RAFER and TRE]

[they are loading up and checking handguns]

RAFER
Got the info?

TRE
Yeah.

RAFER
Who?

TRE
Some of these other guys we see floating around. We've seen them a little...

RAFER
Yeah, they're hiding, they're sneaking around. I know the kind they are. So what's the deal, where we going?

TRE
Some kind of restaurant or bar kind of thing.

RAFER
Where?

TRE
Out other side of town. Never been there. We'll find it.

RAFER
Ok. Ok. See her?

TRE
No. Maybe we'll catch up to her.

RAFER
Ok.

TRE
Getting bits and pieces

RAFER
Yeah ok. Let's go.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 9

[A hang out place.]

[ENTER GANGERS]

GANGER 1 [playing a role]

What we got to be here for anyway. We always gotta be –

GANGER 2

You said it man –

GANGER 1

--doing stuff –

GANGER 3

Pain in the ass this guy.

GANGER 4

And we still not making jack.

GANGER 2

That supposed to be changing.

GANGER 3

Yeah, I don't know.

GANGER 4

Anyway we just chill out little.

[ENTER RAFER and TRE]

GANGER 1

Hey baby.

TRE

Yeah, that's cool.

RAFER

What you all doing? Hanging around, drinkin', smokin', shootin your all mouth off – seen it before.

GANGER 2

We're keeping you safe, man.

GANGER 3
That's right

GANGER 2
Tell him.

RAFER
I got my own keeping safe.

[draws gun, aims at them]

Which of you knows where she is?

[TRE follows suit draws and aims at them]

[overlapping, ad lib]

GANGER 2
Hey hey, what's up ok?!

GANGER 3
You want this? I'm done with you!

GANGER 4
You come on! let's do it!

[they start to draw their own guns]

[ENTER SUPERMAX]

[out of surprise, they all lower their guns]

GANGER 2
Hey.

GANGER 3
Up?

GANGER 4
You're not supposed to be here.

SUPERMAX
Yeah, I am. Yeah, I am. Why not? Well, it's the big star Rafer J. What you doing, boy?

RAFER

Not your boy. What am I doing? I'm hunting. Hunting bad guys. You a bad guy? What you all think? This superman guy a bad guy? We don't know.

Where are they?

SUPERMAX

They're already dead. I'm the last of them. And I got rid of them – loose ends had to go be trimmed. Clipped. Now they're gone. We did it. We did it to her. A bunch of us. Yes. And I was there. Have you seen her lately? Tell her hello.

[general laughter]

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

MARKITA

What are you all doing?

JANELLE

Yeah, what is this? Supposed to be a party. Instead some kind of weird thing.

MARKITA

I don't like what's going on. What's going on?

SUPERMAX

I did it to her. Yeah. Others took turns, but I was the main event. Yeah.

MARKITA

Rafe, don't let yourself be drawn into this.

JANELLE

This is crazy.

[to SUPERMAX]

You're a jerk! You're a piece of garbage!

SUPERMAX

You weren't thinking that the other night.

JANELLE

You don't know what I was thinking. Yeah...

[She gives brief sardonic dismissive laughter]

SUPERMAX

Out in the desert. Under the stars. Where no one knows us. Where no one can help.

RAFER

I accept your challenge.

SUPERMAX

Good. Then let's go.

[EXIT SUPERMAX]

[EXIT RAFER in opposite direction]

[EXIT THE GANGERS]

JANELLE

Oh my god, my god –

MARKITA

Where are they going?

TRE

I don't know. I never heard anything about this. I got to go see what's happening.

MARKITA

Ok all right. Be careful.

JANELLE

Find out tell us, ok?

TRE

Yeah sure. But you don't follow you don't follow. It's going to be dangerous. Ok?

MARKITA

Yes, all right.

[EXIT TRE]

MARKITA

Have to try to find out.

JANELLE

Yeah. Where they going?

MARKITA

Who knows, who knows...got to try to ask around. I don't know...

JANELLE
Who can help us with this?

MARKITA
Don't know. Let's go.

JANELLE
Always some crazy...

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

SCENE 10**[ENTER GRIOT]****GRIOT**

A man goes into the remote canyons
Where his enemy lives
And he goes in search of him

This is one version of the story

In another they meet out in the desert
Far from any town
Far from any others
Certain things are decided then
Perhaps one of them is killed

Or perhaps there is a nightclub
A fateful nightclub
Los Angeles has so many
Every city has so many --

Cubes of darkness
Where those who are lost
Go to become more lost

A girl is there --
Who is this girl met at a fateful moment?
Met at a fateful place

A bullet is only a small thing
It lies in the palm of the hand so easily

It looks like a trinket of some kind
You would not think
You would not think it could
Put a hole in a man's chest the size of a fist

A bullet lies in the palm of the hand so easily
You would not think it could so easily destroy a world

CHORUS

For when a man is gone
When a woman is gone
A world is gone with them

[EXIT ALL]

SCENE 11 [a remote wild area]

[ENTER GANGERS 1 and 2]

G2

Homies, where that fucker goin now? what the hell he doin?

G1

He's nuts off his head, man.

G2

Yeah I understand that, but like where does he think he gonna be goin? We out in the middle of nowhere here. Yeah, where we at? Look at that fuckin cactus or something, putting its arms out to the sky. Look like Jeezus, don't it? 'Oh save me, father. I am your son.' Cactus -- look like a man there, don't it? Like a man hanging on a tree.

G1

What up with you, man? You in the klan or something? Man hanging on a tree... I'm gonna hang you on a tree...where's that bottle?

[G2 hands bottle to G1]

G1

Vodka, I always like vodka, and crack. One jack you up and the other kind of mellow it down. I knew this one dude, white dude, you might know -- every time he took a hit, it would make him puke every time.

[G1 takes out crack pipe]

G2

Puke?

G1

Yeah.

G2

What he do it for?

G1

He like it -- fuckin addict. Couldn't stop.

[G1 is smoking crack pipe; hands bottle back, etc.]

G2

You're an addict, crack head.

G1

Maybe I am, but I don't puke. But listen to my story that I'm telling here. Where's that bottle?

G2

It's right here.

[G2 hands bottle to G1, who hands it back later]

G1

Cactus – here, here's your vodka.... So this dude he knew that every time he take a hit of crack, he's gonna puke. So what's he do? He always smoke standing over the toilet. Can you believe that?

G2

That's sick, man.

G1

It's truth. [takes a hit] hooooo But I don't puke at all. Makes the stars come out so clear. Look at that – we're on top of the world here. We gone to a different world!

G2

Funny here ain't it? – weird. Hear that? You hear that?

G1

No, what?

G2

Aliens.... You fuck an alien?

G1

I don't know, depend on what she look like.

G2

How you know it be a she?

G1

Well that's a good question.

G2

They say some's like reptiles.

G1

Yeah, I think we got reptiles anyway though, don't need to have them come from outer space, got 'em right here.

G2

Yeah I think so.

G1
Yeah.

G2
That Tre around?

G1
No, got rid of him.

G2
Who did?

G1
Those other guys, they trapped him up – poom poom – two in the gut, he sprawlin’ out, crawlin’, screwing himself around on the ground like a worm.

G2
Gut shot, man -- hurts bad.

G1
It was like he kind of balled up, that was it. Blood all over... man gotta go.

G2
Where? what you mean we ‘sposed to stay here – be look out.

G1
Only need one for that. You stay here. I gotta do something else. Some those others coming round, don’t worry.

G2
Yeah, you sure? I feel weird.

G1
Don’t worry, man, don’t worry, be cool. Give me another pull.

G2
Ok.

[drinks]

G1
Cool. Gotta go.

[EXIT G1]

G2

Dark night, strange night. Full of rocks and blackness. Never been here before. Sky...look at that – stars, look at ‘em all. Never saw so many, never been this far out before. Cold, too –wind. Weird place out in nowhere here.

Look around over here – where the damn hell am I?...damn.

[EXIT]

SCENE 12**[ENTER GRIOT]****GRIOT****A man alone****Driving into the canyons****[ENTER RAFER]****Head lights came toward him****Almost running him off the road****He gets out****[RAFER moves to another point on the stage]****Then there is another****[ENTER SUPERMAX]****A dark shape in a car****Got out and came toward him****[Rafer and Supermax move in a pattern around each other]****The two met in the dark****Between the high walls of the canyon****RAFER****An empty road in front****SUPERMAX****An empty road behind****RAFER****Darkness and stone cliffs on either side****SUPERMAX****Above, the stars. So many stars.****RAFER****The earth is just a small speck of dust.****GRIOT****The light wash of their headlights****Interlocked like the horns of two bulls**

The two men stepped through the crossed swords of light

Two men of courage and two men of fate

**Would their blood also be poured out
Onto that same dark ground?**

**[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA They throw themselves
between them]**

**JANELLE and MARKITA
NO NO NO NO**

**GRIOT
What is it to step out into your fate
Into your death
Into the night**

Th infinite night

**RAFER
A dark road in front**

**SUPERMAX
A dark road behind**

**RAFER
Black stone on either side**

**SUPERMAX
The millions of stars above**

**GRIOT
And no way out**

[EXIT ALL, THE WOMEN LAST]

SCENE 13 [a hang out place]

[ENTER GANGERS 3 and 4]

[drinking, smoking]

GANGER 3

What the hell is going on here? We got to be selling dope, doin' other stuff. And instead of that –

GANGER 4

Yeah, we got to be distracted –

GANGER 3

Yeah.

GANGER 4

By these two hip hop clown boys.

GANGER

Rumor is this Supermax Superman guy –

GANGER

What a joke yeah.

GANGER

That he ain't what he says, he something else.

GANGER

Something else all right. He come in here putting moves on everything that moves.

GANGER

Yeah.

GANGER

So they having a show down?

GANGER

Did they find those two that did that whatever?

GANGER

Yeah I guess they were from back there. They took 'em out.

GANGER

Who took 'em?

GANGER
We don't know.

GANGER
See that's what I'm saying, there's strange things --

GANGER
Who's this 'who'? You know --

GANGER
Yeah, whoo who, whoo...

GANGER
Rumor is there's only one gonna come back.

GANGER
Yeah well, it's a showdown.

GANGER
No. Rumor is, won't be the way they think.

GANGER
I don't know.

GANGER
Yeah I don't know.

GANGER
We supposed to be guarding this dude, Rafer?

GANGER
No, he don't want no guards. He threw us all out.

GANGER
Let's get out of here, might be spies.

GANGER
Yeah.

GANGER
Yeah ok.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 14 [a street]

[Markita enters and waits. Then Janelle enters to her.]

JANELLE

I found out where they're going.

MARKITA

How?

JANELLE

Rumors – those guys snooping around. But this is not a rumor, it's a fact.

MARKITA

Someone knew in advance.

JANELLE

I guess so.

MARKITA

That means it's a set up.

JANELLE

Let's go.

MARKITA

This is dangerous.

JANELLE

Maybe we can show up and they both get some sense.

MARKITA

A duel – god, what crazy!

JANELLE

Yeah, they're crazy.

MARKITA

Better go. You know where?

JANELLE

Oh yeah.

MARKITA

Well let's go.

[EXIT BOTH]

SCENE 15

[A remote place]

[ENTER RAFER]

[ENTER SUPMAX]

SUPERMAX

They sent me out here to get rid of you. These people thought they were setting me up – I'm setting them up. Both setting you up.

RAFER

That's fine.

SUPERMAX

You're not going to think it's fine.

RAFER

You talk, but you can't do.

SUPERMAX

They're tired of your messages – love, spirit, liberation, all that. They don't want that. This a new time

RAFER

No, it's the same time.

SUPERMAX

You are out of date.

RAFER

I don't have any date.

SUPERMAX

Speaking of date. I guess you must have heard.

RAFER

Yes.

SUPERMAX

I guess you must know.

RAFER

I know what you are.

[supermax's manner becomes less formal.]

SUPERMAX

Do you know what she is? Up with you, man? You want to be like one of these pussy-whipped white boys? follow some bitch around like dog on a leash? You like lickin' up fish too maybe? That's cool – we take you down to the fish market that the chinks have. You can lick your tongue up the whole place, floor and everything. Take you out on the boat too, you can lick the nets.

RAFER

I think you need to back off your lip a little, before it starts to run too fast for your brain. I've seen that kind of thing before, can be very hazardous to a dude's health – have to call the ambulance, the emergency number.

SUPERMAX

I think I got your number – that's the number that she gave you, tattooed right on your forehead. Everybody know except you. Maybe you ought to look in the mirror. Of course, it's such a high number it goes all the way around your head. That's the number that she pasted right on you.

So now we're finally getting somewhere.

RAFER

Is that right?

SUPERMAX

I think so ...A washed up, one time rap stars –

RAFER

I didn't know I was washed up.

SUPERMAX

You look in your bank account lately?

RAFER

Lots of other things than bank accounts. Bank account something I don't really need, I've got other things.

SUPERMAX

What would that be now? all your homeboys you think you got?

RAFER

That's one thing.

SUPERMAX

Half of them are cop informers, bought and paid for long ago, might's well have a little price tag on their ear. What kind of a clown are you? – singing and dancing for the people.

RAFER

Do more than sing and dance. You will find out. Got many on my side. How many do you have? I have many, many.

SUPERMAX

I don't need anything like that, I take care of things myself.

RAFER

We'll see about that. It's just as well that they send some clown like you, someone who thinks he's some kind of something. Isn't that what you think? You think you're something?

SUPERMAX

Who do you think you are?

RAFER

I know what I am. It took me quite a while, I have to admit. But now I know nothing can stop me, nothing can touch me, no one can silence me. You can't either.

Here I am. Come and get me! It's me. The real me. You've seen me on some video, you've seen images of me, heard my voice. But now you have to know what I can do.

SUPERMAX

That's fine. But wait –

RAFER

What we waiting for? You were gearing up with your big speeches. I was very impressed. What we got to wait for?

SUPERMAX

I've heard some people say the invention of the handgun was unfortunate. I recommend a knife.

[He throws down a knife]

A blade cuts through the lies and the illusions.

A blade cuts through the False, so that the True can stand.

I challenge you to pick it up.

[ENTER JANELLE and MARKITA]

[They throw themselves on the floor between the two men.]

JANELLE and MARKITA [ad lib, overlapping]

Stop! Stop! Stop!

JANELLE [they are semi-prostrate, like supplicants]
Please.

MARKITA
Please stop.

SUPERMAX
Get back.

RAFER
There is danger. Go.

[The women retreat. They remain at the edge of the area, watching in fear.]

[**RAFER** and **SUPERMAX** move to a somewhat different position. The girls stay, but they are not in the way.]

RAFER
I agree with what you say, and I accept your challenge.

[**RAFER** bends to pick up the knife. As his hand grasps the knife on the floor, **SUPERMAX** pulls out a gun from his jacket.]

A GUN SHOT

[**RAFER** staggers falls. He makes some efforts to get up – it is as if he is trying to rise beneath a crushing weight, but then he falls face down and lies there.]

SUPERMAX
It is most unfortunate, is it not? that such a brave, idealistic young man should also be such a fool?

[**SUPERMAX** fires several rapid shots into **RAFER'S** body. Blood leaks from his corpse onto the stage floor.]

[After the shots are fired, the women rush forward and throw themselves on **RAFER'S** body. Screaming.]

[Then they rise. There are blood stains on their dresses and shawls.]

MARKITA

You pig, you are not even human. You're filth.

JANELLE

You're SCUM!

MARKITA

There are no words to say what you are.

JANELLE

One day –

MARKITA

One day

JANELLE

Someone will do this to you.

MARKITA

On the day, on that night

JANELLE

We will be laughing.

MARKITA

Laughing.

JANELLE

Laughing.

MARKITA

I spit on you, I spit on you.

JANELLE

You will be cursed.

MARKITA

Cursed forever.

JANELLE

In all your life.

MARKITA

Which will be short.

SUPERMAX

I understand that you're upset. But the best man won, what can I say?

MARKITA

You're scum. You're human garbage.

JANELLE

You're shit. You're worse than shit.

SUPERMAX

Move away.

[The women retreat]

SUPERMAX [to Rafer's dead body]

You thought that you were going to go against the man. You thought that you were going to be asserting your rights and all that kind of thing.

I knew guys like you before – big man, big star. Think you're something special, think the world is going to be all different just for you, but it ain't going to be. And now you're nothing. You're less than nothing. The coyotes will be tearing you to pieces. By the day after tomorrow that pretty face of yours will swell up like a gourd in the desert sun. The ants will crawl over your eyelids. Your eyes that are now merely pieces of brown glass will stare sightless toward the sky.

GRIOT

Deluded idealistic young man, like all the other dead soldiers, you listened to the sermons of the preachers preaching -- virtue, they told you, honor, love of country, the people.

SUPERMAX

What a joke. I heard their sermons too, but I did not listen. I could see where it would lead. Lead right here. I listened instead to one thing and one thing only.

GRIOT

You knew the fine inspiring sermons would lead to one place, only here. But here the desert, empty to the winds of pitiless heaven, to sun as hot as hell, and the empty witless frozen moon, the rats and scorpions, the thousand eyes of every demon dreamt up by the saints themselves – it might as well be Verdun, the Soame, it might as well be The Tet Offensive, Hue, Khe San.

It might as well be the road of devastation to Baghdad, the plains of Afghanistan –

SUPERMAX

Or here, the outskirts of Los Angeles, or wherever we are.

[The women remove their shawls and cover RAFER's body with them.]

JANELLE

One day you'll pay.

MARKITA

You will pay for this.

JANELLE

His blood will follow you.

MARKITA

These are our curses.

JANELLE

You will know what it is.

MARKITA

You will know what it is, to be cursed.

[ENTER ONE-UP]

ONE-UP

All right, you two get out of here ok?

THE WOMEN

NO!

ONE-UP

What you doing here anyway?

MARKITA

I see something bad for you

ONE-UP

Hey yeah. If making millions is bad. Bring it on. Hey yah...

MARKITA

I see something around you. I see something.

ONE-UP

Around me hah? Yeah I'm gonna have a lot better than you around me. ok? kind of worn out, used up, run through like they say. Who needs it?

Now get out.

[They regard him silently for a moment and then turn to leave.]

ONE-UP

Wait where you going?

(pause)

JANELLE

You will not find us.

[EXIT JANELLE and MARKITA]

ONE-UP

That was great, man. That was great.

SUPERMAX

Necessary. I guess.

ONE-UP

Oh yeah, oh yeah...yeah it was. We're gonna be big. But he's out the way. Other things be changing too. This Keller, big shot money guy, he's got another thing coming don't worry. All right. Get out a here now, the way we said. The others'll meet you.

SUPERMAX

Ok. I'm a little worried.

ONE-UP

No. Everything be fine, we got it allⁱ set up.

SUPERMAX

Ok.

ONE-UP

Keep me posted.

SUPERMAX

All right.

[EXIT SUPERMAX]

ONE-UP (alone)

Hey, I'm getting someplace now. It's a crazy night. I can feel it. Feel the spirits coming through, coming through the dark.

[ENTER DO-LES]

ONE-UP

Hey man you did real good. Fooled him totally.

DO-LES

Yeah...sucker....

ONE-UP

Guess so.

DO-LES

No rules in this world.

ONE-UP

So I got your reward.

DO-LES

What reward?

ONE-UP

This.

[DRAWS GUN. SEVERAL SHOTS.]

**[DO-LES's FALL, WRITHES IN PAIN, AND DIES.
HIS BODY LIES THERE]**

[ENTER GANGER 1]

ONE-UP

We're getting rid of all the old lumber been lying in the way all along. When you get back there, tell them.

GANGER 1

Yeah ok. What about him, Supermax?

ONE-UP

Guys like that are a dime a dozen. You take him out later, whenever. We'll get a new one like him, don't worry. And get rid of those two women.

GANGER 1

Right.

[EXIT BOTH]

[DO-LES'S L'S BODY LIES THERE]

[RAFER'S BODY LIES THERE]

END OF PLAY
